

Guide to Services,
Rules and Eligibility Standards

Veterans Assistance Commission
of
Winnebago County



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SECTION 000: DEFINITIONS

Homeless: as defined in [305 ILCS 5/6-2.1](#) and [24 CFR 91.5](#)

Dependents: The spouse or surviving spouse of an eligible Veteran, who legally resides with the applicant. A child is defined as a person who is unmarried, under the age of eighteen (18) (nineteen if attending a secondary school on a full-time basis), with a Veteran or surviving spouse as a birth parent, adoptive parent, or legal guardian, and legally resides with the applicant.

Eligible Dependents: (See “Dependents”)

Helpless Child/Dependent: Who is under the age of 18 years; or (ii) Who, before reaching the age of 18 years, became permanently incapable of self-support; or as defined in [38CFR S3.57](#).

VACWC: Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County

SECTION 010: PUBLIC PURPOSE

Public Purpose - Aims in providing financial aid and services. The purpose of this program is to assist in the alleviation and prevention of poverty and thereby to protect and promote the health and welfare of all Veterans and qualifying dependents of Winnebago County.

To accomplish this purpose, this manual authorizes financial aid and social welfare services for Veterans and qualifying dependents in need thereof by reason of unemployment, illness, or other cause depriving them of the means of a livelihood compatible with health and well-being, and provides for the development, use and coordination of all resources in this State, governmental and private.

The Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County shall establish such standards of financial aid and services as will encourage and assist applicants and recipients to maintain a livelihood compatible with health and well-being and to develop their self-reliance and realize their capacities for self-care, self-support, and responsible citizenship.

The maintenance and strengthening of the family unit shall be a principal consideration in the administration of this Commission. All public aid policies shall be formulated and administered to achieve this end.

SECTION 100: ELIGIBILITY

101: Characterization of Military Service

Applicants for assistance from the VACWC must present a DD-214 or Certificate of Service showing eligible service and character of discharge for the Veteran. If the applicant does not have a DD-214 or Certificate of Service, they may authorize the VACWC to obtain a copy from [IDVA](#), [National Archives](#) or other available repositories. No assistance can be granted to an otherwise qualified applicant without a DD-214 or Certificate of Service. Persons who received assistance using falsified statements of service shall be reported to the appropriate authorities. A Veteran's last period of active military service (as defined in the eligibility table below) regardless of time in service will establish the initial eligibility for VAC assistance.

Additional income and other qualifications are further applicable:

Initial Benefit Eligibility Determination Table						
VAC Benefit	Discharge Characterization					
	Honorable	General ¹	Other than Honorable ²	Bad-Conduct (Court-Martial)		Dishonorable
Special ²				General		
Veteran Service Officer Assistance and VA Claim Representation	Yes	Yes	Yes ²	Yes ^{2,4}	Yes⁴	Yes⁴
Requests for DoD to Correct Military Records	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁴	Yes ⁴	Yes⁴	Yes⁴
Financial Assistance to needy Veterans and dependents ³	Yes ³	Yes ³	Yes ²	No ²	No	No
Transportation assistance	Yes	Yes	Yes ^{2, 6}	No ²	No ²	No
Referral to other Social Service Agencies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

¹ Uncharacterized discharges are general discharges. Individuals who received an Entry Level Separation must seek VA Characterization of Service (COS) review prior to receiving VAC benefits. If the VA determines that the discharge is honorable, then the Veteran shall be deemed eligible for VAC benefits.

² Other than Honorable and Special Court-Martial discharges may be eligible after VA Characterization of Service (COS) review. If the VA determines that the COS is honorable, then the Veteran shall be deemed eligible for VAC benefits.

³ Eligibility is ultimately determined by income qualifiers as set forth by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

⁴ Eligibility is limited solely to preparation and filing of discharge upgrade requests with the Military Department Boards for Correction of Military Records or COS review applications with the VA.

⁵ Deleted 02/14/2024

⁶ Veterans who are eligible for VA health care benefits and have a VA-authorized appointment are eligible for transportation.

102: Other Eligibility Criteria

1. **Residency** – Applicants for Financial Assistance or Emergency Assistance must be residents of Winnebago County. Proof of residency must be furnished unless it is confirmed the applicant is homeless. Proof of residency can be established by but not limited to:
 - a. An Illinois Driver’s License or Illinois State ID with an address in the county.
 - b. Copy of a current residential lease in the applicant’s name.
 - c. Copy of a recent utility bill (electric, water, gas, telephone) in the applicant’s name.
 - d. Voter Registration Card.
 - e. Personal records such as receipts for payment of rent and /or utilities, union dues, insurance premiums; employment records, or other documents that provide proof of

address.

- f. Any other proof of residency approved by the Illinois Secretary of State as acceptable for issuance of a state Identification card.
- g. Homeless Veterans must provide proof and enroll in services that will assist with acquiring shelter/housing such as:
 - i. Winnebago County Housing Single Point of Entry 844-710-6919, 612 N. Church Street., Rockford, IL 61103.
 - ii. Veterans Administration HUD/VASH Program 815-227-9002, 4920 E. State St. Suite B, Rockford, IL 61108
 - iii. SSVF provider VETERANS Path to Hope 815-321-4673, 805 S. McHenry Ave., Suite D Crystal Lake, IL 60014

2. **Dependents** - The spouse or surviving spouse of an eligible Veteran, who legally resides with the applicant.

A child is defined as a person who is unmarried, under the age of eighteen (18) (nineteen if attending a secondary school on a full-time basis), with a Veteran or surviving spouse as a birth parent, adoptive parent, or legal guardian, and legally resides with the applicant.

Disabled persons over eighteen, under a guardianship order, shall qualify if they have an eligible Veteran or surviving spouse as a birth parent, adoptive parent, or legal guardian, and legally resides with the applicant.

3. **Temporary Absences of Adults** - The absence of an adult member of the assistance unit for a temporary period does not affect eligibility for assistance as long as the absence does not exceed sixty (60) days or a permanent residence is not established outside of Winnebago County.

4. **Temporary Absences of Children** - The absence of a child for a temporary period does not affect eligibility for assistance provided that **all** of the following is true:

- The period of absence cannot exceed sixty (60) days.
- An adult member of the assistance unit must retain financial responsibility in whole.
- The adult must accept and exercise responsibility for the child's welfare.
- The child cannot have been removed from the home by a court of law.
- The child cannot have been placed outside the child's home by a state or local agency.
- The home must be the child's permanent residence.

5. **Availability to Work** - Available to work means that the applicant/recipient is available and willing to accept full-time employment (140 hours per month) and work the required shift(s). Public Aid provided by the VAC is intended to be the last resort and applicants must seek alternative sources of income to maintain eligibility. Failure to apply for alternative sources of income will deem the applicant ineligible. A person who is able to engage in employment, including dependent members of their family, age 16 or over not in regular attendance in school as defined in Section 4-1.1, of the Illinois Public Aid Code Article VI who is unemployed or employed for less than the full working time for the occupation in which he is engaged, must register for and accept bona fide offers of employment, as provided in Section 11-20 of the Illinois Public Aid Code Article VI. The local governmental unit shall determine,

pursuant to rules and regulations, sanctions for persons failing to comply with requirements under this Section. In addition to any sanctions provided for in Section 11-20 of the Illinois Public Aid Code Article VI., sanctions may include the loss of eligibility to receive aid under this section for up to 90 days. (Source: P.A. 85-114.)

6. Veterans shall register and maintain certification with the following:
 - a. Illinois Department of Employment Security 217-558-0401 303 N. Main St. 3rd Floor Rockford, IL 61101.
 - b. Veterans Administration Community Based Employment Services 608-509-5745, 608-556-2521, 512-745-0380, 4920 E. State St., Suite B. Rockford, IL 61108

NOTE : All applicants must produce proof of application of employment. Applicants who voluntarily remove themselves from the workforce are considered ineligible for financial or emergency assistance.

Availability to Work Exceptions – The following are exceptions to the availability to work requirements:

- a. **Medically unable to work** -A current and verifiable document signed by a doctor licensed to practice medicine stating that the applicant is not capable of working.
 - i. If the doctor’s statement does not include a specific return to work date, it will be valid to the VAC for no longer than 30 days.
 - b. **SSI, SSDI, VA NSCP** - An applicant in receipt of any of the following:
 - i. Social Security Disability Insurance
 - ii. Social Security Insurance
 - iii. VA Non-Service-Connected Disability Pension
 - c. **Care of a disabled, aged, or ill** – If the applicant is required in the home for the full-time care of a disabled, aged, or ill member of the immediate family, or for the care of a child under six (6) years of age. The applicant must provide a current and verifiable document signed by a doctor licensed to practice medicine stating that the immediate family member requires full-time care.
 - i. Immediate family is the Veteran, spouse (the person to whom the Veteran is legally married as recognized by the State of Illinois), minor children whom the Veteran and or spouse have legal custody over, and the Veterans and spouse’s parents.
 - ii. Only one caregiver may be exempted per eligible household. VACWC determination will be made based upon a written report from a licensed, practicing, medical professional or on relevant social service organization information.
 - d. **Homeless Veterans** -Veterans participating in a Federal or State funded Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program, Veterans Transition Program, or the like, are not required to seek full time employment. The agency housing the Veteran is to verify monthly in writing that the resident Veteran is actively participating in the program.
7. **Strikes** - If a Veterans Assistance applicant/ recipient is not working due to a strike, the

applicant/recipient shall be provided referrals to other financial assistance agencies and be required to provide follow-ups from same prior to being considered for assistance. Such Veterans must maintain IDES certification.

An applicant's/recipient's unemployment due to an unlawful strike or strikes not sanctioned by the Union will be viewed as voluntary removal from the workforce, and thus will not be eligible for financial assistance.

8. **Rehabilitative Services** - To enable applicants/recipients to become employable, written referrals may be made to the Illinois Department of Rehabilitative Services (DORS), local vocational rehabilitative services, or to medical/psychological services. Referrals will be made on a VACWC Referral for Other Assistance form.

Willful failure or refusal to follow through on any such referral or to participate in good faith in such services constitutes grounds for denial or termination of assistance from the VACWC.

9. **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)** - Families in receipt of TANF will not be eligible for Financial Assistance or Emergency Assistance.

10. **Township General Assistance** - Recipients of financial assistance administered by a township are not eligible for VACWC financial assistance.

11. **Debts to the Government** - An applicant/recipient who has an overpayment with Winnebago County, a township, Administrator of General Assistance, or another VAC shall not be eligible for Veterans Assistance until the debt has been cleared.

Delegates and Employees - Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County Delegates, Alternates, employees, and their spouses are not eligible for financial assistance from the VACWC.

NOTE: An applicant or recipient who provides fraudulent information such as; misrepresentation of income or assets, misrepresents themselves by presenting false identification, or false representation of an eligible or ineligible applicant / recipient in order to obtain assistance from the VAC shall not be eligible for Veterans Assistance and may be prosecuted.

SECTION 200: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS

201: Applicant Rights / VAC Responsibilities

The Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County (VACWC) must administer the Veterans Assistance Program in such a way as to afford certain rights to applicants and recipients. In addition, applicants will be provided a copy of rights and responsibilities which must be read and signed by the applicant/recipient.

Non-discrimination - Everyone shall have the right to be treated by the VACWC in a fair, respectful, and impartial manner to include but not limited to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, order of protection status, marital status, physical or mental disability, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, real estate transactions, access to financial credit, and the availability of public accommodations.

Courtesy - Courtesy, consideration, and promptness in dealing with the public must be shown in carrying out official responsibilities. Actions which deny the dignity of individuals or conduct which is disrespectful to others must be avoided. Employees must recognize that inattention to matters of common courtesy can adversely affect the quality of service the agency is responsible for providing. Where appropriate, courtesy to the public should be included in the standards for employee performance.

Timeliness - Applicants/recipients have a right to prompt and timely support. All applications shall be adjudicated within 30 days after presentation of all required documentation by the applicant/recipient.

Confidentiality - Applicants and recipients are entitled to confidentiality in the investigation of eligibility and in the maintenance of case records. For the protection of applicants/recipients, the VACWC and its respective officers and employees are prohibited, except as provided below, from disclosing the contents of any records, files, papers, and communications except for purposes directly connected to the administration of Veterans Assistance or as required by law.

Some applicant information such as the applicant's household found eligible for Veterans Assistance may be shared with Winnebago County, the Administrator of General Assistance at the Township Office, or other Administrator of General Assistance in the jurisdiction of the applicants/recipient's address and previous address.

Review of Records - All of an applicant/recipient's records shall be made available for review upon the receipt of a written request from him/her. Records may be examined ONLY in the presence of a duly authorized VACWC representative. A copy of these records will be made available upon request. Each applicant shall be granted the right to present additional information to the VACWC that may have a bearing on their application.

Applicants and Recipients have the right to review any section of the VACWC Assistance Criteria.

Referrals - Each applicant, as much as practicable, shall be furnished the addresses and locations of any other agencies and organizations that might be able to give additional help with their individual circumstances.

Notification - Each applicant shall be notified promptly of any decision regarding their application.

202: Applicant Responsibilities

Cooperation – Veteran/Applicant cooperation in determining eligibility is required. Failure or refusal of the applicant/recipient to cooperate with the VACWC will result in the denial or termination of assistance, based on the VACWC's inability to determine eligibility. Veteran/Applicant must cooperate with programs conducted for purposes of obtaining or verifying information, financial or non-financial, upon which eligibility may depend. Veteran/Applicant are required to apply for all other financial benefits and to avail themselves of all potential resources for which they may qualify and to avail themselves of such benefits.

Timeliness - The VACWC needs to receive supporting documents in a timely manner. An incomplete application will be deemed inactive if the required information is not provided within 30 days of the application for assistance unless other arrangements are made with the VACWC case worker.

Reporting Changes in Circumstances - It is the responsibility of the recipients of Veterans Assistance to accurately report any change in circumstances or receipt of income or assets which might affect the assistance payment within five (5) days.

Substandard Housing - The VACWC may refuse to pay rent for substandard housing as defined by appropriate Illinois Revised Statute. Housing Issues should be directed to the Commercial Health Issues Complaint Line 815-720-4100. 555 N Court St. Suite 302 Rockford Illinois 61103.

SECTION 300: CLIENT INTAKE PROCESS

301: Initial Contact and Case File Establishment

Initial contact with applicants seeking services from the VACWC will result in receiving an application packet which is available on the [VACWC website](#). The applicant must complete the application and return with all applicable documents as outlined in the application packet. The applicant needs to provide an eligible discharge (DD-214 or Statement of Discharge). If the Veteran does not have a copy, then the VAC shall request one.

Upon return the case worker will make an initial assessment as to the expected needs of the applicant.

Each client shall be entered into a Customer Relation Management system like VetPro or VetraSpec as an electronic case file. The minimum information required to start an application is the applicants full legal name, telephone number, applicants mailing address and physical address (in the case of a Winnebago County resident who is homeless, the address can be the VAC Office), and other contact information such as an e-mail address if available.

302: Initial Interview

In the process of securing information to determine eligibility, the interviewer shall provide the applicant with pertinent information regarding the Veterans Assistance Program for which the applicant may be eligible, and the eligibility requirements as follows:

1. An explanation of VACWC standards used to determine the applicant's needs and the assistance available from the VACWC, including the allowances for specific assistance items.
2. Review with the applicant all of the eligibility requirements.
3. Collect copies of all documentation required to establish eligibility. This includes information on legally responsible relatives, employers, public and private agencies and the possible use of these resources.
4. Provide referrals to the Illinois Department of Human Services if the applicant appears to be eligible for; Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Aid to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled (AABD), Food Stamps, and/or Medicaid to comply with the provisions of the Public Aid Code.
5. Explain responsibility of the applicant to apply with IDHS, pensions, Social Security, child support, VA Non-Service-connected pension, VA disability, or all other benefits for which any member of the assistance unit may be eligible.

SECTION 400: MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

Case records will be maintained in accordance with state and local laws in a customer relation database system.

Obsolete records, documents, papers, and memoranda pertaining to Veterans Assistance cases may be destroyed or otherwise disposed of by the VACWC anytime subsequent to the expiration of seven (7) years after the matters to which they relate have been concluded, or in accordance with state law whichever comes first.

SECTION 500: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

501: Program Description

Financial assistance is a needs-based program available to eligible veterans and/or dependents. Eligibility is based on an interview and financial evaluation conducted by one of our Veteran Service Officer. Veterans Financial Assistance can be paid toward rent, mortgage, medical premium cost and utilities. Public Aid provided by the VAC is intended to be the last resort and applicants must seek alternative sources of income to maintain eligibility. Failure to apply for alternative sources of income will deem the applicant ineligible. A person who is able to engage in employment, including dependent members of his family age 16 or over not in regular attendance in school as defined in Section 4-1.1, of the Illinois Public Aid Code Article VI who is unemployed or employed for less than the full working time for the occupation in which he is engaged, must register for and accept bona fide offers of employment, as provided in Section 11-20 of the Illinois Public Aid Code Article VI. The local governmental unit shall determine, pursuant to rules and regulations, sanctions for persons failing to comply with requirements under this Section. In addition to any sanctions provided for in Section 11-20 of the Illinois Public Aid Code Article VI., sanctions may include the loss of eligibility to receive aid under this section for up to 90 days. (Source: P.A. 85-114.)

502: Determination of Financial Need

The Veteran Service Officer determines need based upon the evaluation of evidence relating to eligibility factors which must be provided by the applicant to the best of their ability.

503: Verification of Income

Verification must be made of all income for the applicant and spouse, including earnings from employment, cash assistance from family members, or other types of assistance from public and private agencies. The verification process of all income and assets includes the proof of the income generation and the instrument in which it is deposited or stored. i.e., paystubs and bank statements/electronic funds account.

Income includes:

Household Earned Income: Income from performing labor – represents income and expected income from employment. Earned income is defined as monies earned in self-employment or in the form of wages, salaries, or commissions for personal services as an employee of another, including profits from a person's business enterprises, including rental income earned as a landlord or income derived from renting rooms to a tenant in the applicant's primary residence, and similar sources.

Provide proof of income such as check stubs and bank statements for the most recent three calendar months.

Financial Assistance: Income from Unemployment Insurance, Veterans Disability Compensation, other disability programs or insurance, Worker's Compensation, etc. Supplementary Unemployment Assistance (private).

Provide Award letters, check stubs, and bank statements for the most recent three calendar months, receipts.

Pensions and Retirement Income: This includes, but is not limited to Social Security Retirement, Veterans Pension, Government benefit programs, Railroad Retirement, Military Retirement (including Coast Guard, Public Health Service, National Guard, and Reserves), Non-governmental benefits such as employer or union pension plans, Local government benefits such as pension plans for state, county, township, municipal employees.

Provide Award letters, check stubs, pension statements, and bank statements for the most recent three calendar months.

Rental/Housing Assistance: Value of any Section 8, HUD VASH, or other public/private housing assistance. Provide award letters, program statements, W-9 Forms, a copy of a current signed and dated lease agreement.

Contributions, Grants or Loans from Friends or Family: Monetary donations made directly available to the applicant/recipient or eligible members of the household or funds provided directly to the applicant/recipient or members of the eligible household for the payment of basic household expenses. Provide bank statements for the most recent three calendar months., copies of checks, receipts.

Received Child Support: Income received for the use of a child by court order or legal stipulation. Provide copies of three months of checks and three months of bank statements, and court records.

In-kind Income: Any monies paid directly to a vendor on behalf of an applicant/recipient or eligible member of the household for the payment of basic household expenses. Provide copies of checks, and statements from funding source, and receipts.

Other income: Other income consists of income not previously listed such as returns from investments, Income from trust funds and annuities, Contributions or gifts received, Alimony/maintenance, Funds generated from the sale of personal property, Lottery or gambling winnings, Net profit/income from the rental of an apartment, home, or land, Educational loans, grants, scholarships, and other educational benefits paid directly to the student, SSI/SSDI, Educational benefits paid directly to a student, Income from Internet sales such as E-Bay, Amazon, etc., and other similar income. Provide Award letters, check stubs, bank/brokerage statements for the most recent calendar month, receipts, tax forms, a copy of bank statements for most recent three months.

Lump Sum Payments: A non-recurring payment from a third party to a recipient such as a lump sum from the sale of real estate, lottery/gambling winnings, settlement or award, or retroactive income payment. Examples of lump sum payments include injury settlements, workman's compensation settlements, insurance settlements, back pay from SSI or SSD, back pay from VA Pension or Disability.

Following the receipt of Lump Sum Payments, a period of ineligibility is established and is determined as follows:

1. Add the net lump sum payment to all other non-exempt income received during the month in which the lump sum payment is received
2. Determine the assistance level (excluding the lump sum) pay-out per the model used by the VACWC.
3. Lump sum divided by assistance equals the number of months of ineligibility for financial assistance.

Exempt Income: The following is exempt from consideration in determining eligibility for Veterans Assistance and the amount of the assistance payment:

- The cash value of any nutrition/food assistance (SNAP/LINK) or donated foods (surplus commodities);
- Any compensation provided to individual volunteers under the Retired Senior Volunteer Program and the Foster Grandparents Program and Older Americans Community Service Programs established under Title VI of the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended.
- Income in an amount not greater than three thousand dollars (\$3,000) total received by a beneficiary of a life insurance policy.
- Income received from property tax relief programs.
- Educational loans, scholarships, and other educational benefits paid directly to the school for items necessary for school attendance.

504: Verification of Assets

Verification must be made of all assets for the applicant and spouse, including cash, stocks, bonds, investments, credit union, savings and checking accounts, retirement accounts, coins/precious metals, and real estate in which one does not reside.

Exempt Assets:

- Clothing, personal effects and household furnishings
- One automobile for each eligible adult member of the household
- One additional motor vehicle if the equity value does not exceed \$5,000.00
- Tools, electronic equipment, or other materials and equipment required in the applicant's principal occupation
- Cemetery plot, burial crypt, prepaid cremations and/or funeral services
- First \$50,000 of a Retirement Account such as 401k's, IRA's, etc. (Retirement Accounts that would incur a penalty for early withdrawal)

Asset Disregard - Up to \$2,000 of Total Assets will be deducted. (Approved 08 FEB 2023)

505: Verification of Expenses

Verification must be made of all expenses for the applicant and spouse, including:

Shelter (Primary residence) - Mortgage Statement, Lease, Deed to Home, Real Estate Tax Statement, Homeowners Insurance

Utilities - Original Utility Bills in applicant's name

Unreimbursed Medical Expenses – Original receipt, Medicare deduction on award letter

506: Calculating Financial Assistance

The poverty guidelines updated periodically in the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the authority of 42 U.S.C. 9902(2) shall be used to determine financial assistance eligibility and calculate the maximum amount to be awarded (<https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>.) The Superintendent will incorporate adjustments made to the HHS Poverty Guidelines in VACWC forms used to determine eligibility for financial assistance. Applicants shall meet with a VACWC caseworker monthly, unless the applicant is not required to complete work searches or on fixed income then quarterly, to review documents and verify eligibility.

The goal of the financial assistance program is to bring eligible applicant's income up to 175% of the federal poverty level. To calculate the need for financial assistance, calculate the applicant's gross monthly income and in the available assets.

507: Financial Assistance Awards

Financial assistance awards may be applied to:

Shelter - Rent, mortgage payments, mobile home payments, or mobile home lot rental.

The VACWC cannot provide assistance for rent or mortgage in which the occupied building is in an unsafe condition and/or the number of occupants in a building or unit exceeds the number allowed under State and Local laws.

Payment in Full – Veterans Assistance and the applicants'/recipient's resources must be sufficient to pay the current monthly rent or mortgage payment. It is the applicants'/recipient's responsibility to provide the difference between Veterans Assistance and the monthly rent or mortgage within the 30-day assistance period. Verifiable written Statements of Support from other social service agencies are acceptable.

Shared Living Arrangement - When a recipient shares a dwelling, the amount budgeted as shelter or rent should be determined on an equal share basis among the adult members of the household.

Payment Restrictions – Rental payments are not to be made to relatives of the applicant unless it is a separate dwelling of rental property or unless an executed lease/rental agreement is presented.

Utilities - Allowable utilities include heating fuel, cooking fuel, electricity, water, wastewater, and garbage disposal.

Only the actual use (or average monthly for multi month billing) for the billing period may be used to compute eligibility on the VACWC Budget Computation Worksheet. Assistance can be granted up to the full amount due less any credits.

The utilities must be in the applicant's name, or the applicant must provide verification that he/she is responsible for the utility payments under the terms of the rental/lease agreement.

508: Disposition of an Application for Veterans Assistance

Disposition of an application for Veterans Assistance must include the following:

The determination of eligibility (approval) or ineligibility (denial) for each assistance item (e.g. shelter, utilities, etc.).

The written notification of approval or denial including a statement of the right to appeal.

Upon approval, the issuance of assistance, the total amount of which is to be allocated by the recipient, by voucher to a vendor on behalf of the applicant/recipient.

Issuance of a VACWC Notice of Rights and Responsibilities of Veterans Assistance Applicants and Recipients Form showing a specific report day for the evaluation of continued assistance. The applicant/recipient or their duly authorized representative is to acknowledge receipt of the notice by signing and returning one copy of the notice.

509: Notice of Decision

In accordance with the due process, every applicant/recipient is entitled to a timely and written notice as to action taken concerning their case and of the disposition of their application. Every applicant for Veterans Assistance has a right to an accurate determination of eligibility within thirty (30) days after the application is completed. The thirty (30) day time limitation may be exceeded only when a decision cannot be reached due to an applicant's delay in providing information or material essential to a determination of eligibility.

The written notice shall contain:

1. A clear statement of the action taken.
2. A clear statement of the reason for the action, sufficient in detail to allow the applicant/recipient to determine whether the VACWC action is proper.
3. A specific policy reference which supports such action, and
4. A statement of the applicant/recipient's right to appeal.

510: Disbursement of Assistance

Assistance is to be issued in the form of a voucher which is then submitted to the Winnebago County Finance Department for payment directly to the vendor and/or the applicant. The recipient of VACWC assistance shall allocate approved benefits between the total amount of rent, total amount of

utilities, and total cost of medical insurance first, with the remainder being paid directly to the applicant. Total assistance provided will not exceed 175% of the FPL found at (<https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>.) No voucher or check shall be issued for payment exceeding the actual amount due on the bills presented, to include late fees and arrears.

511: Overpayments and Reimbursements

Overpayments are payments issued in a given month to, or on behalf of, an applicant/recipient by voucher which is higher in any amount than that provided for in the VACWC standards. Overpayments may result from caseworker administrative error or misrepresentation of facts.

The Superintendent will investigate any circumstances where a recipient of Veterans Assistance is believed to have received an overpayment and make a determination from the case record and any additional information provided from the recipient. If the necessary information is not provided by the recipient, the entire assistance benefit issued at the time the overpayment occurred will be considered an overpayment.

Should the Superintendent determine that an overpayment occurred, he/she shall provide written notice of the alleged overpayment and the intention of the VACWC to recoup the overpayment in writing to the recipient.

The Notice must include the factual reason(s) for the overpayment and the legal reference for the overpayment. An attachment to the Notice of Change in Veterans Assistance will specify the amount of assistance that was issued during the time of overpayment, by month; the amount of assistance that should have been issued, by month; and the total amount of the overpayment. The Notice is also to include all appeal rights of the applicant/recipient. If the recipient elects to appeal the matter of the overpayment, no recoupment of the overpayment is to take place while the appeal is pending.

If an overpayment is found to have occurred, the recipient may, within thirty (30) days of the notice of overpayment, request that it be waived if the overpayment was received without the fault of the recipient. The VACWC is to issue a written decision on the requested waiver and the recipient must be notified of their right to appeal the decision.

If an applicant willfully misrepresented income to qualify for assistance and fails to reimburse the VACWC the ineligible amount, the VACWC shall; notify the applicants Township Administrator of General Assistance and surrounding VAC Superintendents of the overpayment, file a complaint with the States Attorney's Office, and with the approval of the States Attorney, file a 1099 with the IRS declaring the amount as unreported income.

If a client has been denied assistance from other government agencies due to an overpayment, the applicant/recipient shall not be eligible for Veterans Assistance until the overpayment is recovered.

Recovery is the repayment of the amount of the overpayment from the applicant's/recipient's assets, either as a result of a voluntary agreement between the applicant/recipient and the affected agency or as a result of legal action.

SECTION 600: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

The VACWC Operations may provide, at the discretion of the Superintendent, an assistance, not to exceed \$2000, to Veterans, Dependents, or Surviving Spouses of Winnebago County, whose income

does not exceed 300% of the Federal Poverty Level. This assistance may only be used once in a 24-month period.

Individuals whose deliberate actions, in the opinion of the Superintendent, result in the need for emergency assistance will be disqualified from eligibility.

601: Eligible Expenses

- Prevention of Homelessness
 - Rental/Mortgage arrears
 - Taxes (Only to prevent repossession limited to max benefit in this section)

Emergency housing for homeless veterans and/or eligible dependents

First/Last/Security for homeless veterans and/or eligible dependents securing housing

- Durable medical equipment
- Medical Co-payments – non-reoccurring
- Household expenses – emergency repairs to sustain basic health and safety as long as the granted amount is sufficient to finish the repair.
- Vehicle expenses – repairs to primary vehicle to keep it operational as long as the granted amount is sufficient to finish the repair.
- Utilities to prevent disconnection. This option is solely for veterans who do not currently receive utility assistance from the VACWC. Only granted if amount is sufficient to settle the account.
- Work boots, safety glasses, other items required for employment.
- Emergency housing for homeless veterans and/or eligible dependents

602: Ineligible Expenses

- Cosmetic or investigational medical procedures & expenses.
- Credit cards, military charge cards or retail store cards. Cable, Internet, or secondary phones.
- Cosmetic vehicle repairs.
- Furniture, electronic equipment, or vehicle rentals.
- Any other expenses not determined to be a basic life need.

Note: The eligible and ineligible expense lists are not all inclusive. Each case will be carefully reviewed for its own merits by a member of the VACWC staff who will make a recommendation to the Superintendent. Upon approval by the Superintendent, payments will be paid directly to the creditor or vendor.

All applications, whether approved or denied, will be reported to the Commission at the monthly meeting.

All applicants will be informed of their right to appeal.

SECTION 700: APPEALS PROCESS

701: Right of Appeal

The VACWC is required to inform its applicants/recipients of their right to appeal at the time of

application and at any time dissatisfaction is expressed. The VACWC is also required to help those individuals desiring to make an appeal and to explain the appeal procedure. Such assistance shall include providing a VACWC Appeal Form and assisting him/her in the completion of the VACWC Appeal Form.

An individual who applies for or receives Veterans Assistance has the right to appeal any of the following:

1. Refusal of the VACWC to accept an application.
2. Failure by the VACWC to act upon an application, make a decision or take appropriate action on any request which an applicant makes within thirty (30) days of the date of the complete application.
3. A decision by the VACWC to deny an application.
4. A decision by the VACWC to reduce, suspend, terminate or in any way change the amount of assistance.
5. A decision granting assistance in an amount which the applicant/recipient deems inadequate.
6. An issue of policy.

702: Responsibilities

An individual who wishes to appeal any VACWC action can file a formal appeal and ask for a hearing. The request to appeal must be received within 10 calendar days of receipt of the notice on the form provided by the VACWC. The appeal is to be heard at a location within Winnebago County, to be determined by the VACWC. The individual filing the appeal will be notified of the date, time, and location of the hearing, in writing, by the VACWC no later than two weeks prior to the hearing date.

The VACWC is to continue the assistance at the level in effect prior to the proposed action unless the reason for suspension is for illegal conduct. The applicant/recipient may be required to refund all or part of assistance granted during this period pending Appeals Committee decision. The applicant/recipient has the right to request that benefits not be continued at the prior level pending the results of the appeal hearing to avoid overpayment. Such requests are to be documented in writing.

The VACWC, upon notification that an appeal has been made, has three (3) business days after receipt to prepare the prescribed Statement of Facts document. This form sets forth the decision questioned by the appellant and the facts known and considered by the VACWC in arriving at its decision.

The Statement of Facts document must also contain the legal basis for the decision and, specifically, the Handbook section(s) justifying the decision. The completed Statement of Facts document is to be sent to the Appeals Committee of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County for its information in hearing the appeal and to the appellant or their duly authorized representative and their legal representative, if any.

Before and during the hearing, the VACWC is to permit the appellant and/or their

representative(s) to examine the case record and any other documents to be used at the hearing and obtain copies of the same. Records may be examined only in the presence of a duly authorized VACWC representative.

During the appeal process, changes in the appellant's situation may occur which affect the eligibility or the amount of assistance to which the appellant is entitled. Provided that the changes are not related to the proposed action being appealed, the VACWC is to initiate the necessary section in the usual manner by means of written notice.

The individual filing the appeal or their duly appointed representative must exercise their right of appeal within sixty (60) calendar days after any decision of the VACWC Appeals Committee. The sixty (60) day period begins with the date of personal receipt of the decision by the applicant/recipient or, in the case of mailing, receipt will be deemed to be within three days of the date of the postmark. If the appeal is not made within the sixty (60) day period, the VACWC action will be final.

The sixty (60) day time limitation does not apply when the VACWC fails to take action on a specific request or denies a request without informing the applicant/recipient.

703: Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee shall consist of at least four Commissioners and will be chaired by the Administrative Coordinator accordance with the By-Laws.

The VACWC Appeals Committee will:

1. Provide a location and facilities for conducting hearings on Veterans Assistance appeals. The Appellant or their duly authorized representative will:
2. Meet their expenses incidental to such hearings.
3. Provide for the attendance of witnesses and the production of books and records needed to substantiate the appellant's claim.

The Appeals Committee of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County has the following responsibilities with reference to hearings of Veterans Assistance appeals.

1. Review the completed Statement of Facts provided by the Superintendent of the VACWC.
2. Schedule the hearing and notify the appellant of the date and time set for the hearing no less than ten (10) days prior to the hearing date unless an earlier date is agreed upon by the appellant and the Superintendent of the VACWC. The notice will be issued by the use of the prescribed Notice of Hearing form; see Appendix 703-1.
3. Postpone the hearing only at the request of the appellant or the Superintendent of the VACWC.

4. Continue the hearing when it appears necessary to obtain and present additional pertinent information or for good cause shown. Good cause includes, but is not limited to: illness or non-availability of the appellant, a necessary witness, or the appellant's legal counsel
5. The Appeals Committee may deny a request for appeal if the Committee believes the evidence clearly shows that the request for appeal is frivolous, that is granting the claim would contradict established guidelines. An example would be granting assistance to an applicant who cannot produce proof of service in the U.S. Military.

704: Hearing Procedures

The Appeals Committee of the VACWC shall conduct hearings at an accessible location within Winnebago County. If requested by the appellant, a qualified Arbitrator may be appointed to conduct the hearing; however, the cost of an arbitrator will be paid by the appellant.

A hearing shall be conducted informally to:

1. Control presentations to points at issue.
2. Explain the purpose and procedure to be followed.
3. Determine the manner in which the decision will be rendered.
4. Advise the appellant that he/she is entitled to examine any record or report presented at the hearing.
5. State the problem(s) as indicated from the Notice of Appeal and the Statement of Facts.
6. Safeguard the confidential nature of the proceedings by limiting participants to those directly concerned, such as the appellant or their duly authorized representative, their legal counsel, witnesses, and the Superintendent of the VACWC.
7. Develop the relevant facts.
8. Secure pertinent information relating to the appeal.
9. Allow the appellant to present evidence in support of their claim, including the testimony of witnesses.
10. Allow the appellant to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses.
11. Summarize the points developed.

A record will be made of the hearing consisting of either an audio or an audio/video tape recording of the hearing, to be transcribed at the request of either party at the cost of the VACWC.

705: Decision

After the conclusion of the hearing, the Appeals Committee of the VACWC will:

1. Prepare a written statement comprised of its findings of fact and its decision which affirms, reverses, or modifies the Superintendent of the VACWC's decision and includes the legal basis.
2. Notify the Superintendent of the VACWC office and the appellant of the decision, in writing, within ten (10) days of the date of the hearing unless additional time is required and has been allowed for proper disposition.
3. Require a written report from the Superintendent of the VACWC to the Executive Committee within ten (10) business days as to carrying out the Committee's instructions when its decision reverses or modifies the Superintendent's original decision;
4. Maintain records of findings of fact and decision.

706: Failure to Appear

If neither the appellant nor the appellant's duly authorized representative appears at the time and place designated for the hearing, and a postponement by either of them has not been requested in writing, the appeal is considered abandoned and is dismissed.

The appellant has the right to request reinstatement of the appeal within ten (10) days of the date of the Notice of Decision on the appeal for verifiable good cause.

SECTION 800: Referrals

An applicant/recipient is to be provided with information about other programs and services available to assist them with their basic maintenance needs and is to be referred to other agencies which the VACWC believes in good faith to be potential sources of assistance.

Referrals to specific programs are to be done in writing on a VACWC Other Assistance Referral Form and are to be documented in the case file. The applicant recipient has a responsibility to accept a referral made in good faith to a source of potential assistance. Follow-ups from referrals must be returned to the VAC in person prior to the VAC releasing additional assistance.

Applicants for and recipients of Veterans Assistance who appear eligible for other Government Aid will be referred to those agencies such as Job Training, Employment Security, Winnebago County Housing Authority, Department of Human Services, and Social Security. Applicants/recipients who fail to apply for or accept available benefits will be deemed ineligible for Veterans Assistance.

Applicants/recipients who have applied for public aid and request Veterans Assistance while the application is pending may be eligible to receive Veterans Assistance until a determination is made on their application. The applicant/recipient is entitled to all rights to written notice of decision on eligibility for VACWC assistance and/or termination or reduction of VACWC assistance, regardless of any referrals made.

SECTION 900: CLAIMS REPRESENTATION FOR VA BENEFITS

The Veterans Assistance Commission shall provide assistance to Veterans and/or their families with preparing and presenting claims to the US Department of Veterans Affairs. A Veterans

Service Officer who is certified by a recognized Veterans Service Organization and by the General Counsel of the US Department of Veterans Affairs to prosecute Veterans' claims, must be present in order to prepare and submit a VA Claim. All such claims are to be consistent with the guidelines set forth by the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers and/or the certifying Veterans Service Organization.

SECTION 1000: TRANSPORTATION

Veterans Transportation Services

We provide rides free of charge to Veterans and eligible dependents who are Winnebago County Residents with VA approved appointments at William S. Middleton Memorial Hospital and surrounding clinics. We also provide rides to local VA approved appointments. Eligible Veterans of the VACWC can utilize RMTD bus passes when available on authorized regional bus routes.

Eligible Veterans of Winnebago County may also utilize VACWC provided transportation at various assigned pick-up points in Rockford to go to and from Madison VA Medical Center or local medical appointments at no charge.

1001: Eligibility

Transportation will be provided to Veterans, Military Retirees, eligible dependents, and the assistants of those veterans requiring assistance to VA approved appointments, even if it is outside the VA campus. ***Riders must have the ability to enter and exit the vehicle without assistance.***

Clients whose condition presents a risk to the health and safety of other passengers and/or the driver may be denied the use of the VAC Veterans Transportation Service.

1002: Reservation Procedure for the Madison Van

Call **1-815-964-6166**. Leave a message that includes your full name; the last 4 of your social security number; the best phone number to reach you at; the dates, times, and location of all your appointments, and your pick-up point preference. See Appendix 1002-1. *If you need to bring an assistant with you, let us know when you schedule your ride.*

Please schedule your appointments between 9:00 am and 1:30 pm so everyone can get to their appointments and back home in a timely manner.

Our Volunteer Coordinators are only in the office for 2 to 3 hours Monday through Friday excluding Holidays. You can still call for a ride 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

Call at least 5 working days before your appointment to ensure your ride with us.

1003: Reservation Procedure Local Transportation

Call 1-815-516-2850. Leave a message or let the receptionist know your full name; the last 4 of your social security number; the best phone number to reach you at; dates, times, and address your appointments; and your pick-up address. See Appendix 3 for Pick-Up Point Location and departure times. *If you need to bring an assistant with you, let us know when you schedule your ride.*

Call at least 5 working days before your appointment to ensure your ride with us.

1004: Rider Guidelines

Due to limited space, we can only allow Riders to bring: A Small Bag for personal items, Fold-up Walkers, Canes, Small Portable Oxygen Tanks or Concentrators. The VAC does not operate wheelchair accessible vehicles. ***Riders must have the ability to enter and exit the vehicle without assistance.***

We cannot allow Non-folding Walkers, Wheelchairs, Electric Scooters, IV Poles, Wheeled Oxygen tanks or Concentrators.

Please keep all items with you. We are NOT responsible for personal items you bring along or leave behind.

All passengers are required to properly use seat and shoulder belts.

Be considerate of the Driver and other passengers: No Obscene Language. No Threats or Intimidation will be tolerated. No Smoking, No Alcohol nor Recreational Drugs allowed in the vehicle. Always Maintain Good Personal Hygiene.

Clients and their assistants are expected to be on their best behavior while waiting at the designated pick-up point, in the van, and at the VA Medical Center. Harassment of other passengers, VA employees, or VAC employees will not be tolerated and may result in loss of riding privileges.

Our Drivers are all Volunteers. They donate their time to help Veterans get to their appointments in a timely and professional manner.

Call our office to schedule your ride as soon as you get your appointment letter or call from your healthcare provider.

1005: Medical Emergency

If a veteran experiences a medical emergency on the trip to the VA Medical Center the Driver will stop the vehicle, call the paramedics, and render first aid. The distressed veteran will be taken to the nearest hospital by emergency vehicle.

The VAC Transportation Service is not a replacement for an ambulance; clients experiencing medical distress are strongly encouraged to dial '911' for immediate attention rather than the VAC Transportation Services.

1006: Drivers Responsibilities

Providing clean, safe, and reliable transportation – As representatives of the VAC, our drivers are expected to be polite and maintain a clean and groomed appearance. They will observe every client's right to privacy. Each vehicle is to be operated in a safe manner in accordance with acceptable 'Rules of the Road'.

Incident Reporting – In the case of a vehicle accident, an incident involving passenger behavior, or where someone in the vehicle was injured, a written report of the incident must be provided upon returning to the VAC Office.

1007: Transportation Coordinator Responsibilities

Determination of services – The Transportation Coordinator will make the determination if our services are appropriate for a client. If it is found that a client is not eligible for continued service due to a loss of mobility, a disability, or an illness it is the responsibility of the coordinator to assist with identifying alternate transportation.

Passenger Concerns – The Transportation Coordinator will address passenger concerns to the best of their ability. If necessary, they will pass it on to the Superintendent.

Transportation Reports – It is the responsibility of the Transportation Coordinator to assemble monthly transportation reports and provide them to the Superintendent. Incident reports are to be forwarded directly to the VAC Superintendent

APPROVAL

This handbook was approved by the Veterans Assistance Commission of Winnebago County
06/17/2024

By: _____ Date: _____
Jesus M Pereira, Superintendent

By: _____ Date: _____
A.C. (Dave) Davis, VAC President

By: _____ Date: _____
Terrell Lewis, VAC Services Coordinator

Attested By, VAC-A Secretary, _____ Date: _____

CHANGE LOG

2023 FEB 9th – Changed Section 504 – Added Asset Disregard of \$2,000 that was passed by commission on 08 FEB 2023.

2023 MAY 11th – Changed Section 504 – Added Disregard of Cemetery plot, burial crypt, prepaid cremations and/or funeral services. This was passed by commission on 10 MAY 2023.

2023 MAY 11th – Changed Section 504 – The first \$50,000 of a Retirement Account such as 401k's, IRA's, etc. and Retirement Accounts that would incur a penalty for early withdrawal will be disregarded. This was passed by commission on 10 MAY 2023.

2023 JUN 15th – Changed Section 703 – The Appeals Committee shall consist of at least four Commissioners and will be chaired by the Administrative Coordinator accordance with the By-Laws. This was passed by commission on 14 JUN 2023.

2023 AUG 9th – Changed Section 600 – The VACWC may provide, at the discretion of the Superintendent/Commission, a one-time assistance, not to exceed \$2000, to Veterans, Dependents, or Surviving Spouses of Winnebago County, whose income does not exceed 300% of the Federal Poverty Level.

2023 AUG 9th – Changed Section 506 – The goal of the financial assistance program is to bring eligible applicant's income up to 175% of the federal poverty level.

2024 FEB 14th- Added Section 000

2024 FEB 14th- Updated Chart in section 101 allowing for assistance by VSO for those who have a general and dishonorable discharge. Also allows for financial assistance if the veteran meets VHA eligibility

2024 FEB 14th- Allow for transportation for veterans who are VHA eligible

2024 FEB 14th- Deleted Footnote 5 in section 101

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 102 Changed 100 hours to 140 hours

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 102 Deleted VA Service-Connected Disability of 70% or greater

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 102 Deleted permanent and total

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 102 Added definition of homeless to the table

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 102 Deleted HUD VASH – Recipients of HUDVASH will not be eligible for shelter or Utility assistance.

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 301 add a Customer Relation Management system like VetPro or VetraSpec

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 501 Deleted Financial Assistance Officer and replaces with Veteran Service Officer

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 501 Deleted and/or personal hygiene based on individual needs

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 501 Deleted Financial Assistance will not be paid directly to Veteran/eligible dependent.

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 506 inserted

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 506 Deleted every moth and inserted monthly. Unless the applicant is not required to complete work searches or on fixed income then quarterly

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 507 Deleted – Subsidized housing - Applicants receiving Section 8 housing vouchers or living in HUD subsidized units may only be eligible for limited assistance as determined by agreements with the local Housing Authority. Applicants living with a Section 8 client or subsidized unit recipient shall not be granted housing or utility assistance.

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 507 Deleted Personal Needs- Personal needs include toiletries, paper products, personal hygiene products, cleaning supplies, and minor first aid products. - The expense is automatically computed on the VACWC Budget Computation Worksheet. Personal hygiene needs are provided for with gift cards and are limited by the maximum amount of assistance available to an eligible applicant.

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 600 – Deleted Commission, one-time, and added This assistance may only be used once in a 24-month period.

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 600 –Inserted under Expenses

Eligible for payment Emergency housing for homeless veterans and/or eligible dependents

First/Last/Security for homeless veterans and/or eligible dependents securing housing

Durable medical equipment

Medical Co-payments – non-reoccurring

Added “as long as the granted amount is sufficient to finish the repair.” To Vehicle expenses and Household expenses.

To Utilities to prevent disconnection “This option is solely for veterans who do not currently receive utility assistance from the VACWC. Only granted if amount is sufficient to settle the account.”

2024 FEB 14th- Changed Section 900 deleted may and inserted shall

2024 MAR 20th – Added Dependents, eligible dependents, Helpless Child/Dependent, and VACWC, Definitions Section

2024 MAR 20th - Added Section 010 Public Purpose

2024 MAR 20th – Section 301 deleted “and certifiable” from

2024 MAR 20th – Section 501 Deleted “current” and added “medical premium cost”

2024 MAR 20th - Section 502 Deleted “VAC Superintendent” and added “Veteran Service Officer”

2024 MAR 20th - Section 507 Deleted “Partial payments will not be sent to landlords or mortgage companies.”, “Veterans Assistance is not available for back (unpaid) rent. “. . Veterans Assistance is not available to pay for taxes, insurance, repairs, or mortgages in arrears.”,” Assistance for heating oil is available only for the months of October through April. “. “Veterans Assistance is not available for utility deposits or connection / reconnection charges”, and added “for housing expenses.”, “unless an executed lease/rental agreement is presented.”, “for utility payments.”.

2024 MAR 20th – Section 510: added “and/or the applicant”, “shall”, “and total cost of medical insurance first, with the remainder being paid directly to the applicant. Total assistance provided will not exceed 175% of the FPL found at ([https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines.](https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines))”, “to include late fees and arrears”. Deleted “may”, “the total amount of”, “and/or”.

2024 MAR 20th – Section 601 added “Prevention of Homelessness, Rental/Mortgage arrears, Taxes (Only to prevent a tax repossession)

2024 MAR 20th – Section 602 deleted “Taxes - property or otherwise”

2024 MAR 20th – Section 800 deleted “If the”, “he/she and his/her dependents are not eligible”, added “will be deemed ineligible”.

2024 July 10th – Multiple Sections deleted tables and inserted text in paragraph form

2024 July 10th – Section 102 added “12.5. Availability to Work - Available to work means that the applicant/recipient is available and willing to accept full-time employment (140 hours per month) and work the required shift (s). Public Aid provided by the VAC is intended to be the last resort and applicants must seek alternative sources of income to maintain eligibility. Failure to apply for alternative sources of income will deem the applicant ineligible. A person who is able to engage in employment, including dependent members of his family age 16 or over not in regular attendance in school as defined in Section 4-1.1, of the Illinois Public Aid Code Article VI who is unemployed or employed for less than the full working time for the occupation in which he is engaged, must register for and accept bona fide offers of employment, as provided in Section 11-20 of the Illinois Public Aid Code Article VI. The local governmental unit shall determine, pursuant to rules and regulations, sanctions for persons failing to comply with requirements under this Section. In addition to any sanctions provided for in Section 11-20 of the Illinois Public Aid Code Article VI., sanctions may include the loss of eligibility to receive aid under this section for up to 90 days. (Source: P.A. 85-114.)”, “All applicants must produce proof of application of employment. Applicants who voluntarily remove themselves from the workforce are considered ineligible for financial or emergency assistance”

2024 July 10th- Section 301 added “Initial contact with applicants seeking services from the VACWC will result in receiving an application packet which is available on the VACWC website. The applicant must complete the application and return with all applicable documents as outlined in the application packet.”

2024 July 10th – Section 501 added “Public Aid provided by the VAC is intended to be the last resort and applicants must seek alternative sources of income to maintain eligibility. Failure to apply for alternative sources of income will deem the applicant ineligible. A person who is able to engage in employment, including dependent members of his family age 16 or over not in regular attendance in school as defined in Section 4-1.1, of the Illinois Public Aid Code Article VI who is unemployed or

employed for less than the full working time for the occupation in which he is engaged, must register for and accept bona fide offers of employment, as provided in Section 11-20 of the Illinois Public Aid Code Article VI. The local governmental unit shall determine, pursuant to rules and regulations, sanctions for persons failing to comply with requirements under this Section. In addition to any sanctions provided for in Section 11-20 of the Illinois Public Aid Code Article VI., sanctions may include the loss of eligibility to receive aid under this section for up to 90 days. (Source: P.A. 85-114.)”

APPENDIX: FORMS AND CHECKLISTS

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Appendix 301-1: Verification of Information

VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY ILLINOIS
555 N. Court Street, Suite 300, Rockford, Illinois 61103
(815) 516-2850



NAME: _____ DATE: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY/STATE: _____ ZIP: _____ CASE: VAC _____

VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION (New Client)

AFTER you have completed the below checked items. Contact the VAC office within the next 30 working days. You will be given a date and time for you to return this to the office to complete your intake processing.

- _____ Copy of your DD-214 (with character of service) _____
 - _____ Proof of age, relationship and social security # of dependents listed on application.
 - _____ Landlord/Mortgage holder statement lease agreement or copy of mortgage statement.
 - _____ Proof of unemployment compensation benefits.
 - _____ Proof of registration at Illinois Dept. of Employment Security with VETERANS REP X4.
 - _____ Proof of inability to work: written statement from physician or psychologist*.
 - _____ Pay stubs for the last 30 days.
 - _____ All records of self-employment and/or income from ANY source.
 - _____ Proof of DHS: LINK/SNAP card and current award letter. Expiration of _____.
 - _____ Proof of worker's compensation.
 - _____ Proof of pension payments, disability benefits, social security/SSI.
 - _____ Proof of application/receipt of VA pension/compensation.
 - _____ Records of bank accounts, trust funds, retirement funds, bonds, safety deposit boxes.
 - _____ Proof of ownership of real property.
 - _____ Proof of marriage and/or divorce (any filling of support agreements).
 - _____ Completed and signed application*.
 - _____ Current utility bills IN YOUR NAME OR SPOUSES' NAME ONLY.
- SIGNED BY: _____ ISSUED BY: _____

Appendix 506-1: Form for Calculating Eligibility and Amount of Assistance:

Calculating Eligibility and amount of assistance

	Amount	Family Size	Annual Gross*	Monthly Gross	150% of Monthly Gross**
Family Size		1	\$13,590	\$1133	\$1699
Gross Monthly Earnings		2	\$18,310	\$1526	\$2289
Household Earned Income		3	\$23,030	\$1919	\$2879
Financial Assistance		4	\$27,750	\$2313	\$3469
Pension and Retirement Income		5	\$32,470	\$2706	\$4059
Rental/Housing Assistance		6	\$37,190	\$3099	\$4649
Contributions from Friends/Family		7	\$41,910	\$3493	\$5239
Received Child Support		8	\$46,630	\$3886	*** \$5829
In-kind Income					
Other Income					
Lump Sum Payments					
Total Earnings					
Assets					
(Earnings + Assets)					
Standard of Need (From Right)					
Eligibility for Assistance up to:					
Monthly Expenses					
Shelter					
Utilities					
Child Support Paid					
Total Expenses					
Assistance Awarded:					

SAMPLE

Veteran: _____

Prepared By: _____

Date Prepared: _____

Approved By: _____

Date Approved: _____

**The Federal Poverty Level guidelines change yearly. The levels currently used are from the Department of Health & Human Services.*

***The assistance level the VAC provides is dependent on the budget the VAC receives from the County.*

****For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$590 to the 150% of Monthly Gross for each additional person.*

Appendix 703-1: Notice of Hearing form

VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY

555 N. Court Street, Ste. 300 - Rockford, Illinois 61103-1010
Telephone (815) 516-2850



NOTICE OF APPEAL

Date of Appeal: _____
Appellant Name: _____
Address: City: _____ Street Address: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____

I, Hereby appeal to the Veterans Assistance Commission Executive Committee
(Check One) ___ The Decision or ___ Inaction of the Commission representatives
Regard my (Check One) ___ Application or ___ Monthly Assistance, for the following reasons:

SAMPLE

I am requesting a hearing before the Veterans Assistance Commission Executive Committee.

Appellant's signature _____ Date _____

(THIS SECTION FOR USE OF THE VETERANS ASSISTANCE COMMISSION OFFICE ONLY)

Date Notice of Appeal Received: _____ Date of Decision Appealed From _____
Case Name: _____ Case # _____

Note: The Veterans Assistance Office will assist you in preparing the above form. Upon completion,
file the notice with the Veterans Assistance Commission Office. If you require legal services, you
may ask for an attorney at:

Prairie State Legal Services, Inc.
303 N. Main Street Suite 600
Rockford, Illinois 61101
815-965-2902, FAX 815-965-1081, for the des 815-965-5114

Veteran: _____ Date _____

VACWC rev 4/19

Appendix 1002-1: Transportation: Pick-up Points and Departure Times

PICK-UP POINTS	DEPARTURE TIME
Parking Garage 300 Block of Wyman Street, Rockford	6:45 am
Public Safety Building 420 W. State Street, Rockford	6:55 am
Faust Landmark Hotel 630 E. State Street, Rockford	7:00 am
VFW Post #9759 2018 Windsor Road, Loves Park	7:15 am
Mobil Gas Station 5213 Elevator Road, Roscoe	7:25 am
Neli's Restaurant 1055 Gardner Street, South Beloit	7:30 am

Please arrive early. Departure times may vary based on ridership and weather conditions.